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ABSTRACT

THE FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TEXT OF THIS DOCUMENT: Operation Stay In School is a program that focuses the combined efforts of parents, law enforcement personnel, probation officers, and school district staff on improving school attendance. Under the leadership of Judge Dennis Adams, following extensive study of effective truancy programs throughout the state, Operation Stay In School was activated as a pilot program in the Sweetwater Union High School District from October 20, 1981, to March 30, 1982. The program, designed as a preventative, not punitive, approach to improved attendance, has the following objectives: (1) Preventing truancy; (2) Reducing loss of student learning time; (3) Assisting parents who may be having problems with their sons/daughters; and (4) Preventing daylight crimes by juveniles. In implementing the program, law enforcement officers from Chula Vista, Imperial Beach, and National City joined forces with the members of the district staff in conducting spot sweeps at various locations throughout the South Bay. Approximately 373 students who should have been in school were apprehended and taken to a receiving center and returned to their parents. Students who were wards of the court were taken to juvenile hall. Immediate follow-up action was taken. Parents were contacted; students were counseled; and everyone involved was made aware of the legal, social, and personal problems that truancy represents. RESULTS WERE POSITIVE: (1) ATTENDANCE WAS IMPROVED - a decrease of 6.7 percent was noted in the non-illness absence rate district-wide; and (2) VANDALISM DECREASED - the Chula Vista Police Department reported a 30 percent decrease in daytime burglaries; National City Police Department reported a 38 percent decrease in daytime residential burglaries and a 47 percent decrease in vehicle burglaries between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. during the Operation Stay In School sweeps last school year. Reactions from parents of the community have been positive and supportive. Operation Stay In School is an example of various community agencies working together. Because of the benefits realized, the program will be continued during the 1982-83 school year. (Author)

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OPERATION STAY IN SCHOOL

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